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First Committee

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New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Introductory statements

The Chairperson: This morning, the First Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items. Before proceeding with our work, allow me first to make a brief statement in my capacity as the presiding officer of this body.

It is a great honour and privilege to have been elected Chairperson of the First Committee of the General Assembly. I thank members for their support and will spare no efforts to bring our deliberation to a successful conclusion.

This year's session of the First Committee takes place against a background of some urgency. Not much has been achieved in the field of multilateral arms control diplomacy in recent years, but the global and regional security challenges persist. Again we have a window of opportunity to address the important disarmament and non-proliferation issues. I appeal to all members to look actively for common ground and to identify areas of agreement rather than disagreement. Consensus is not a goal in itself, but it is certainly preferable to sustained and chronic gaps between differing security perceptions.

We will not be able to agree on everything, but let us try to agree on more than we have been used to agreeing on over the past few years. Let us listen carefully to each other's statements with the aim of understanding the security concerns of all stakeholders. This is of crucial importance, because the issues at hand are indeed serious. They include nuclear disarmament, production of fissile material for weapons purposes, nuclear-weapon-free zones, security assurances, possible militarization of outer space, compliance and verification proliferation threats, biological weapons, chemical weapons and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. That list is not exhaustive. It is up to you, the Member States, to achieve substantive progress. I, as Chairperson, can only facilitate your work.

To facilitate our work in the best possible manner, it is my intention to continue the process of improving the working method of this Committee. I went through the organizational aspects of this year's session last Thursday. Let me on this occasion just reiterate the following. Delegations are encouraged to avoid unnecessary overlap and duplication as regards draft resolutions and decisions. I invite members to respect the system of rolling speaker's lists. Interventions should be limited to 10 minutes for national statements and 15 minutes for statements on behalf of regional groups. Even shorter interventions will be most welcome. I intend to start meetings on time. Regional groups are kindly requested to convene their meetings at times that do not conflict with the Committee's proceedings.

We are to embark upon an intergovernmental enterprise, but our ultimate goal is obviously to

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achieve something that will affect civil society positively, so we will listen to civil society, as custom requires. I am working with the Bureau and the Secretariat to organize the civil society input as effectively as possible, and I trust that all delegates of the Committee will participate in this dialogue later in the month.

Finally, colleagues, I am now in your hands. Please feel free to advise me, to make proposals and to involve members of the Bureau in your undertakings, should the need arise. I trust that you will have extensive consultations among yourselves in order to reach agreement on as many resolutions and decisions as possible.

Wherever feasible, let our voice be collective. The late Mahatma Gandhi was born on this very day. With his vision of peace and non-violence in mind, I wish you all the best of luck in your endeavours.

It is now my great pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Mr. Tanaka (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I am pleased to address the members of this Committee upon the opening of this session. We begin on a positive note indeed, for today our Chairperson is the first woman to preside over this Committee in its 61-year history. I offer you, Ambassador Juul, my sincere congratulations on your assumption of this heavy responsibility. I also wish to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their appointments and to pledge the fullest cooperation and support of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in making this session productive.

Over the last two weeks, speaker after speaker in the General Assembly plenary meetings have offered a gloomy prognosis for international peace and security, while not even half of the statements mentioned the issue of disarmament. This was less than satisfactory, but certainly does reflect the current environment facing disarmament issues. I beg to ask delegates to work harder in their own Governments to raise the priority of disarmament and non-proliferation. But for those who did speak to the subject, their grounds for concern are familiar to us all and relate to various setbacks in the past year, including the lack of significant progress on disarmament, the silence on the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the disappointing climax to the NPT Review Conference and the Review Conference on small arms, failure to comply wit non-proliferation commitments, growing terrori threats, rising military expenditures, new resorts to th threat or use of force, new dangers in the Middle Ea and the Korean peninsula and the persistence unilateral approaches to security.

Yet, we must not let such events blind us to th achievements made during the same period. Last yea the General Assembly adopted a major convention, th International Convention for the Suppression of Acts Nuclear Terrorism. This summer, it adopted the Globa Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which offers a plan action for what the United Nations system should do i the years to come. It invites the Secretary-General t establish a comprehensive database on biologica incidents and notes the importance of his proposal t establish within the United Nations a commo programme of biotechnology stakeholders to reduc terrorist threats and promote the pubic good. Mor States have joined key multilateral disarmament an arms control treaties, and more have signed or ratifie the International Atomic Energy Agency Additiona Protocol.

Over 19 per cent of the world's declared stockpil of approximately 70,000 metric tonnes of chemica agent have been verifiably destroyed, and almos 30 per cent of the 8.6 million chemical munitions an containers covered by the Chemical Weapon Convention (CWC) have now been verifiabl destroyed. The fact that we are able to report th achievements in concrete figures is the direct result o the verification mechanism in that Treaty.

The Conference on Disarmament has conclude this year's session, which was characterized by productive, structured debate on key issues before i with signs of positive developments. I, therefore, regre that the Conference on Disarmament could not adopt report to this session of the General Assembly eve though the report was merely procedural as it failed t reflect more positive events of this year. I urg members of the Conference on Disarmament to mak every effort to build on the developments of the las session, with a view to commencing early substantiv work during the 2007 session.

I wish to also underscore the important role of th United Nations Disarmament Commission in building common, shared understanding of the most immediat threats. I believe that the recommendations adopted b

the Commission on improving its work methods will help it to address its challenges more effectively.

It is important — in all bodies of our disarmament machinery — to remind the world not only of the dangers that threaten us, but also that we are not powerless in the face of them – that practical, positive steps are within our reach. We should be awakened from walking in our sleep. We should build upon these positive steps one by one, small as they may be, in spite of the uphill battle along our path towards disarmament. This is why we have to be practical and realistic and demonstrate the spirit of compromise.

It is not enough for us simply to agonize over the future or to make accusations over who is to blame for the world's persisting threats. Frankly, this will get us nowhere. The First Committee must be more than a forum for reciting policy statements. We must, instead, work together to build bridges over the divisions that remain.

In recent years, the Committee introduced changes in the way it conducts its deliberations. Last year's thematic debate marked an important step forward in improving our methods of work. The Committee must also make a sincere effort to reduce the number of resolutions, while ensuring that they are more concise and action-oriented, with improved follow-up measures. Adopting certain resolutions biennially or triennially would help, as would consolidating others that address common themes.

The Committee will hear from the presiding officials at each of the institutions that comprise the United Nations disarmament machinery, as well as from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the President of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Presidents-designate of the forthcoming review conferences of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the Chairmen of the Groups of Governmental Experts dealing with the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and with verification issues. We will also hear addresses by a number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as by Hans Blix, the Chairman of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission.

The issue of nuclear weapons has been a focus of United Nations deliberations ever since its inception. Despite some cold war reductions, tens of thousands of such weapons still exist, and we also have new, emerging threats from such weapons in the Middle East, South Asia and North-East Asia, while several States are developing long-range missiles to deliver such weapons. The old problem of vertical proliferation is now no longer confined to the five NPT nuclear-weapon States, while the danger of horizontal proliferation persists. Our anxiety about the future of the NPT regime is further fuelled by the impasse on the Korean Peninsula and by our concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions.

I am certain that the world would welcome a further commitment by the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce substantially their holdings of both strategic and non-strategic weapons, under a new treaty to follow the existing ones.

The world would also welcome greater transparency with respect to both the number of weapons and the amount of fissile material held by all States that possess such weapons, as well as clarification of their specific plans to meet their disarmament commitments.

I hope that the Committee will also voice its strong support for the negotiation and timely conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty, while underscoring the urgent need for progress on other issues, such as the weaponization of outer space, negative security assurances, and nuclear disarmament within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament.

Our common task with respect to biological and chemical weapons is to bring their respective treaties closer to universal membership, promote national implementation measures, and secure compliance.

The Chemical Weapons Convention experience is instructive. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has successfully run an action plan on national implementing legislation and a universality action plan since 2003. While the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) lacks a comparable structure of permanent institutions, BWC States parties have endeavoured to comply with their BWC obligations and to build further confidence. I therefore hope that the forthcoming BWC Review Conference will

contribute to enhancing transparency through strengthened confidence-building measures.

Weapons of mass destruction are, understandably, a concern of all States, as are the dangers posed by a wide range of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons, landmines, submunitions, artillery rockets and other such weaponry that have been debated throughout the history of this Organization. Actual human casualties suffered by those weapons, particularly in conflict-ridden regions, such as Africa and the Middle East, have been devastating. Those weapons are difficult to control, since many have legitimate defence uses. There are also powerful economic interests that promote the continued production and export of such weaponry, and there is as yet no binding multilateral treaty, apart from the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, to control such commerce, though the gap between the ground reality and the rule of law may change in the years ahead if the proposal for an arms trade treaty moves forward.

The agreement last year on an instrument for the marking and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons marked a significant political step forward in that contentious area. The disappointing outcome of this year's Conference to review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons must not frustrate future progress in that field. Despite its failure to reach agreement on a final document, the Conference was successful in placing the issue of small arms at the forefront of disarmament issues. States across the board reaffirmed their full commitment to the principles, objectives and measures of the Programme of Action, which already includes the convening of biennial meetings to consider its national, regional and global implementation.

But the next step is to tackle the issue of illicit brokering. The Group of Governmental Experts that was established by the General Assembly will commence its work in November to consider steps to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

With respect to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, it is gratifying to note that the Group of Governmental Experts has made some solid and encouraging progress in enlarging the coverage of the reporting geographically, as well as in agreeing on an optional form for reporting data on small arms and light weapons.

I am also very pleased to report that the United Nations standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures is approaching a new milestone. We are hoping that, by the end of this year, a record number of States will have used that instrument, an achievement that will be all the more significant as global military spending continues to rise.

Next month, at its forthcoming review conference, parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will mark the entry into force of Protocol V dealing with explosive remnants of war. The final success of that vital endeavour is now in States parties' hands and will depend on their ability to achieve further progress in the implementation of the Convention and ensuring its compliance.

I cannot today address in detail all the other items that are on our agenda, but I can assure all members that my Department will continue to assist member States in their work, as best as its limited resources will allow.

No opening statement to the First Committee would be complete without a tribute to the hard work of the many dedicated individuals and groups from civil society on behalf of disarmament and non-proliferation. Though they are underfunded, let us reassure them that their efforts are not underappreciated, for they have accomplished much in performing research, advocating constructive changes in public policy, educating the public, and training future generations in disarmament and non-proliferation.

I would like to thank the Non-Governmental Organization Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security, including its President, Ann Lakhdhir; Bhaskar Menon, the editor of *Disarmament Times*; and all of their colleagues in civil society who have worked for many years on behalf of virtually all the issues before this Committee.

In closing, please accept my best wishes for an informative and productive session.

Agenda items 82 to 97

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to remind delegations of the agreement to limit their statements to a maximum of 10 minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. In that context, I would like to advise delegations to please pay attention to the "traffic light" on the podium.

Mr. Skogrand (Norway): It is a pleasure to see you, Madam, presiding over this meeting. Your appointment is an honour for the Norwegian Government. Your task is not an easy one. This session of the First Committee takes place against a rather grim and frustrating background.

Not much has been achieved in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in recent years. We failed to agree on a substantive review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in May last year. We failed to agree on disarmament and non-proliferation at the United Nations Summit in September last year. We failed to agree on any follow-up of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects just a few months ago. In short, the present international security environment is not particularly conducive to multilateral cooperation in the field of arms control. We shall have to change that.

Supporting arms control measures is not a question of pure idealism. It is not based on an altruistic wish to promote the common good. Actually, it is about self-interest. All countries would be well served by peace, security and stability, regionally as well as globally. Regrettably, lack of mutual trust among members of the international community has slowed progress in recent years.

Despite that difficult background, we cannot surrender to passivity. Last year, Norway initiated cooperation between seven States from all geographic regions. Together, we are trying to pave the way for a global consensus on steps to sustain and strengthen arms control and non-proliferation. We will continue our efforts in connection with the upcoming NPT review cycle.

This session of the First Committee creates new opportunities. As we know, no legally binding decisions or resolutions are to be adopted this year, but it is in our hands to send clear messages that may reverse some of the negative trends we have witnessed in recent years. Allow me to give a few examples.

First, preparations for the next NPT Review Conference will soon start. The General Assembly should be able to agree on the way to proceed. An early agreement on unresolved issues would create new optimism.

Secondly, global stocks of weapons-grade fissile material are in great excess. This session of the First Committee could contribute to efforts towards commencing negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. Such negotiations would supplement national and multilateral efforts to substitute the use of weapons-grade fissile material in the civilian sector with low-enriched uranium.

Thirdly, a new and crucial review conference of the Biological Weapons Convention will be convened later this year. This Committee has the opportunity to send a strong signal to the States parties and the international community that progress in ridding the world of biological weapons should be actively sought.

Fourthly, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a subject matter for this Committee. Small arms may not have the same terrible cataclysmic potential as weapons of mass destruction. Nonetheless, small arms are responsible for the overwhelming number of lives lost in wars around the globe every day. It is my sincere hope that consensus-based progress can be achieved. That would serve to rectify the failure of the Review Conference of the United Nations Programme of Action just a few months ago.

Time prevents me from addressing all the important issues at this year's session of the First Committee. Let me just emphasize that nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space are important themes that should be on our agenda.

I am grateful, Madam, for your ambition to continue the improvement of our working methods. We should enhance our efforts to avoid unnecessary duplication and repetition. There can actually be too much of a good thing, and earlier sessions have seen a

large number of competing resolutions. I also support your efforts to better include civil society in our deliberations.

I hope that you will inspire us to be pragmatic and constructive. I am confident that you will enjoy the full cooperation of all delegations present here, and I wish you all the best.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): I warmly congratulate you, Madam, and your Bureau on your well-deserved election. Our appreciation also goes to Mr. Choi Young-jin of the Republic of Korea for his prudent stewardship of the Committee during the sixtieth session.

My delegation's position conforms closely with that of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, we would like to add the following points.

The First Committee opens this session against the backdrop of heightened international concern over the expansion of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We are disheartened that the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects failed to deliver an outcome. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was another debacle. The recent record of the Disarmament Commission has been far from satisfactory. The largely hyped 2005 World Summit could not agree on a common agenda for disarmament, non-proliferation or the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Despite the recurring failure of diplomatic efforts, there is broad agreement that the security of the international community is being challenged by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and by the risk that non-State actors could gain access to such weapons. We wish to recall that the greatest threat to human kind comes from the continued existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use. It is a matter of grave concern that nuclear-weapon States, instead of disarming, are adding greater precision capability to the existing stockpiles, as well as developing new types of weaponry. Such developments hardly deter, and make the acquisition and use of such weapons much more attractive to terrorists, wreaking havoc for us all.

Bangladesh continues to believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Until that happens, we demand reaffirmation of the negative security assurances provided by the nuclear-weapon States.

The non-proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) remain the cornerstones of the global nuclear proliferation and disarmament regime. We must ensure the full universality of the NPT, the CTBT and other international instruments, without exception.

The NPT process began in 1968 with a huge leap of faith. Signed by almost all countries of the world, it provided a guarantee that the non-nuclear nations would forgo building nuclear weapons and that the nuclear nations would divest themselves of their own nuclear weapons. However, the lack of political will on the part of some has cast a shadow over the prospect of making the world a safer place. It is now imperative to consider practical steps that might be taken to ensure the Treaty's continuing relevance and strength.

We strongly support the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Bangladesh continues to believe that a fissile material cut-off treaty is ripe for negotiation.

Bangladesh reiterates its call for the convening of an international conference with the objective of arriving at an agreement on a phased programme that would provide for the elimination of all nuclear weapons; the prohibition of their development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use; and their destruction. We also urge the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention.

Bangladesh's disarmament and non-proliferation record is impeccable. We have consciously and unconditionally opted to remain non-nuclear. Bangladesh is the first Annex 2 nation in South Asia to have signed and ratified the CTBT. We are party to almost all disarmament-related treaties, including the NPT, the CTBT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Biological Weapons Convention. We have also concluded safeguards agreements with the

International Atomic Energy Agency, including additional protocols.

Article IV of the NPT guarantees the inalienable rights of all States parties to develop, research, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Those must apply without discrimination. We are disappointed that extraneous reasons are being used by some nuclear-weapon States to deny the rights of non-nuclear-weapon States to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology.

We are concerned at the continued development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems and the pursuit of advanced military technologies capable of being deployed in outer space.

Bangladesh greatly values regional approaches to nuclear disarmament. Confidence-building measures, such as through the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, can contribute significantly to disarmament. We welcome all existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and call for the establishment of similar zones in South Asia, the Middle East and other parts of the world.

The Kathmandu process needs to be followed up to contribute to regional peace and security in Asia and the Pacific. In South Asia, India and Pakistan must relinquish their nuclear option and join the NPT. Israel must do the same in the Middle East. Comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with their additional protocols, have a deterrent effect on nuclear proliferation.

The preponderant focus on weapons of mass destruction should not lessen the attention paid to the regulation and reduction of conventional arms. Rapid and uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons continues to pose serious threats to countries and regions to have a destabilizing effect. Symptomatic treatment and ad hoc solutions cannot yield durable results.

We are concerned at the fact that a huge number of civilians, particularly women and children, still fall victim to anti-personnel mines in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world. We call upon those States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We wish to report that Bangladesh has destroyed all its stockpiles of landmines. We urge the international community to provide assistance to landmine clearance operations, as well as to the rehabilitation of the victims.

It is appalling that estimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2005 and are projected to keep rising. Most of those expenditures are the result of a frantic arms race that has increasingly negative impacts on our development agenda. We urge all countries, particularly the major military Powers, to divert part of those resources to poverty alleviation in developing countries.

Last year was a great disappointment for the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. We need to move on from that. The trend towards unilateralism and wilful interpretation of multilateral instruments and international law by some must be reversed. The major players in this field need to demonstrate their political will to move forward. It is now time to work for a safer world: a world free of weapons of mass destruction; a world that we hope to be able to bequeath from our generation to the next — a gift of prosperity.

Mr. Shoukry (Egypt): The New Agenda Coalition, on whose behalf I am addressing the Committee, comprises Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand and my own country, Egypt.

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chair of the First Committee and offer you our best wishes and full support.

It has been the long-standing tradition of the First Committee that the general debate is launched by Mexico. The delegation of Mexico has graciously decided, this year, to provide the coordinator of the New Agenda Coalition with the opportunity to take its place as an indication of its unequivocal commitment to the objectives and values of that group in promoting the objective of nuclear disarmament. I take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation, as well as that of the other members of the coalition, to Mexico, and to reaffirm our solidarity and our resolve to enhance our common objectives for the sake of international peace and security.

There is no doubt that international disarmament efforts have not lived up to our collective aspirations and shared commitments. We have witnessed, for the past few years, a series of setbacks and undesired

outcomes which have impeded progress and prevented much needed achievement. This regrettable impasse, moreover, comes at a time when the international community is witnessing a chain of unprecedented security challenges that merit serious attention and add a pressing need to strengthen cooperation among States. If there was ever a time to demonstrate strong a political will in the field of disarmament, it is now that such spirit and resolve must surface. This current impasse needs to be reversed, and the New Agenda Coalition is determined to play a constructive and helpful role in this much-needed process.

It is our collective belief that the mere existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use not only pose a threat to international peace and security, but also destabilize an already volatile world witnessing profound and unpredictable changes. The need to eliminate nuclear weapons is as pressing as ever, and it is for this reason that the New Agenda Coalition would like to address the following points today.

The Coalition reiterates it firm belief that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of our global disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Its three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy — constitute an important foundation in maintaining international peace and security. There is a pressing need to see prompt action by nuclear-weapon States to implement their nuclear disarmament commitments, made under article VI of the Treaty, including the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Given the increasing concerns about the lack of implementation of commitments made within the framework of the NPT regime, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament, I would like to take this opportunity to inform member States of the New Agenda Coalition's intention to submit to the First Committee its yearly draft resolution on the acceleration of the implementation of these commitments.

Given the importance we attribute to the NPT, we strongly believe that achieving its universality is essential in promoting international peace and security. We urge the international community to exert all possible effort to achieve this objective, and call upon the three States that are not party to the Treaty to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States. We also call upon that State that has announced its withdrawal from the Treaty to rescind its decision. We also call upon all States parties to the NPT to comply faithfully with their obligations in conformity with articles III and IV of the Treaty. In that regard, we highly value the efforts of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in preventing diversions of nuclear material from peaceful uses to use in nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices.

There has been a clear tendency in contemporary disarmament discourse to treat nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as if they were two separate, disconnected issues. Attempts to secure advances on non-proliferation while retreating from nuclear disarmament commitments is counterproductive. We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes and should consequently be dealt with as such.

The Coalition stresses the importance of the full implementation of commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conference. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference adopted a set of principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as a resolution on the Middle East, which all need to be realized. The Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference (NPT/CONF.2000/28) established concrete obligations for States parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty's objectives, including the nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. There is no doubt that accelerating the implementation of those commitments would contribute significantly to establishing a much safer world. The New Agenda Coalition is ready to engage with other parties to the Treaty in a constructive dialogue to explore creative methods to realize progress in that regard.

The New Agenda Coalition is looking forward to the commencement of the next NPT review cycle with great determination, hope and optimism. Having in mind previous experiences, some of which were positive and others discouraging, there is a pressing need at this critical stage and time to exert maximum political will to ensure a successful and productive review cycle, which commences in May of next year when the first session of the Preparatory Committee convenes. The New Agenda Coalition will fully cooperate with others during this upcoming preparatory

process. We are prepared to play our part in safeguarding the NPT regime and strengthening it in all its aspects.

The Coalition remains concerned also about plans to research the development of new types and uses of nuclear weapons, including the modification of existing ones. At a time when international efforts are being exerted to downgrade the role of nuclear weapons, reports that some States are in the process of developing new types of nuclear weapons or contemplating lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons have been particularly disturbing. For our part, we will continue to insist on further reductions in strategic and non-strategic nuclear arsenals and will continue to argue that nuclear disarmament measures must incorporate the essential elements of irreversibility, verification and transparency, in order to guarantee the confidence of the international community.

The role of civil society is of the utmost importance in supporting the cause of nuclear disarmament and complements other efforts striving to achieve that end. In this context, we would like to voice our full support for a broad and systematic participation of non-governmental organizations in disarmament that advocate a world free of nuclear weapons.

We are also concerned about the risk of non-State actors gaining access to nuclear weapons. This issue deserves our serious consideration. Despite efforts by the international community, vast amounts of nuclear material worldwide remain susceptible to theft and diversion. There is a pressing need to address the safe use of nuclear material and strengthen international cooperation in this field.

There is only one way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used, and that is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. As we have been reminded recently in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission report,

> "So long as any State has nuclear weapons, others will want them. So long as any such weapons remain, there is a risk that they will one day be used, by design or accident. And any such use would be catastrophic."

Nuclear bombs can kill, intimidate and terrorize. They cannot bridge differences, promote dialogue or ensure sustainable development.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Allow me first of all, Madam, to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their election. We are confident that under your leadership, we will further the work of the Committee in putting forward positive and concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. The Non-Aligned Movement will extend its full support and cooperation in facilitating your task in chairing this sixty-first session of the First Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its longstanding principled position on disarmament and international security, as contained in the final document of the fourteenth Summit of the Movement, held at Havana from 11 to 16 September 2006. In that regard, the Non-Aligned Movement will circulate the section of this document on disarmament and international security as a working paper of the Committee.

The Non-Aligned Movement continues to be deeply concerned at the current difficult situation in the field of disarmament and international security. The inability of the World Summit last year to address the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have had a further negative impact on our collective efforts to promote greater world peace and security. We therefore need to intensify our endeavours to resolve the current impasse in the process of achieving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects.

Similarly, the failure of the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to agree on a final document was an impediment to our efforts in dealing with this issue. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the tota! validity of the Programme of Action and underlines the need to coordinate efforts in the United Nations with a view to

reaching an agreement on the follow-up of the Programme of Action in order to ensure its full implementation.

In view of this, it is important that all States Members of the United Nations reaffirm their full commitment to the purposes of the United Nations Charter and their obligation strictly to observe its principles as well as the other relevant principles of international law.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the importance of multilateral diplomacy in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and expresses its determination to promote multilateralism as the core principle of all our efforts and negotiations in these areas.

In that context, it is essential to reconvene, at an early date, preferably in 2007, the Open-ended Working Group on the fourth special session on disarmament, as mandated by the General Assembly.

The Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its principled position on nuclear disarmament, which remains its highest priority, and on the related issue of nuclear non-proliferation in all its aspects. The Movement stresses the need for non-proliferation efforts to be carried out in parallel with efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the existing disarmament machinery should play a central role in addressing our concerns and formulating our responses. The Movement reaffirms the centrality of the First Committee as an essential subsidiary body of the General Assembly in addressing the important issues in the field of disarmament and international security, in particular due to the difficult and complex situation in this field.

While underlining the role of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, we reiterate our call on the Conference to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work. The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the importance and relevance of the Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery and calls on States Members of the United Nations to display the necessary political will and flexibility to achieve agreement on recommendations based on its two agenda items during the current cycle.

It is most unfortunate that large stocks of nuclear weapons continue to exist and that some nuclear-weapon States are keen to develop even more sophisticated and greater arsenals of such weapons. We believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons.

The Non-Aligned Movement emphasizes that progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening peace and security and reaffirms that efforts towards nuclear disarmament, global and regional approaches, and confidence-building measures complement one another and should, wherever possible, be pursued simultaneously to promote regional and international peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, inter alia, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. The Movement reiterates that if the objectives of the CTBT were to be fully realized, the continued commitment of all States signatories, especially the nuclear-weapon States, to nuclear disarmament would be essential.

The Non-Aligned Movement believes that the issue of proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means and that measures in that regard should be taken within the framework of international law, relevant multilateral conventions and the United Nations Charter.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms further that the non-nuclear-weapon States should be effectively assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to call for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States as a matter of priority.

The Non-Aligned Movement underlines that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones created by

the relevant nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are positive steps and important measures towards the strengthening of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In that regard, we welcome the signing of the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty by the five Central Asian countries in Semipalatinsk on 8 September 2006.

The Non-Aligned Movement urges States to conclude agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned with a view to establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones in regions where they do not exist.

The Movement considers the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a positive step towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament and reiterates its support for the establishment in the Middle East of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in accordance with the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. Pending the establishment of such a zone, the Non-Aligned Movement demands that Israel accede to the NPT without delay and promptly place all of its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

The Non-Aligned Movement reaffirms the need to respect the inalienable right of developing countries to engage in research into and the production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination. The Movement also emphasizes the responsibility of the developed countries to support the legitimate requirement of developing countries for nuclear energy. The Movement stresses the importance of transparency in pursuing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives and in carrying out related activities, without any discrimination or selectivity, in accordance with the Charter and international law.

Unless the members of the international community come together to make a collective effort to confront the serious challenges before us, our dream of realizing a future that is stable, prosperous for all and free from deadly weapons will remain unfulfilled. We must show greater political will to achieve our common objectives at the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. During this session, therefore, the Non-Aligned Movement will present draft resolutions or decisions on the following subjects: measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol; United nations regional centres for peace and disarmament; the relationship between disarmament and development; the observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control; promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation; and convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

In conclusion, the Non-Aligned Movement reiterates its full support and constructive engagement to all members during the deliberations and negotiations at this session. We need to do our utmost, with enhanced political will, to ensure the advancement of our collective agenda for a peaceful, prosperous and secure world.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the countries that align with this statement.

The European Union is convinced that in a world of global and interconnected challenges and threats, our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system. The European Union wishes to contribute to the development of a stronger international community, well-functioning international institutions and a rules-based international order. This will entail strengthening the United Nations and equipping it so that it can fulfil its responsibilities and act effectively. The European Union believes that it is important that the work done in the First Committee also contribute to broader objectives set in the United Nations and that the Committee be responsive to relevant decisions of other United Nations bodies.

We will expand on our views in the cluster statements we will deliver during the thematic debate. For the purpose of efficiency and to save time, I will shorten my oral statement today. The full text has been distributed.

The European Union Security Strategy is built on a broad and comprehensive concept of security. This concept is in keeping with the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document's recognition of development, peace and security and human rights as being interlinked and mutually reinforcing. In that document we recorded our agreement that current developments and circumstances require that we urgently build consensus on major threats and challenges. We committed ourselves to translating that consensus into concrete action, including by addressing the root

causes of those threats and challenges, with resolve and determination.

In our view, threat and conflict prevention cannot start too early. We welcome the Secretary-General's progress report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891). The root causes of instability must be addressed with a view to creating lasting solutions, including through efforts to resolve political conflicts by diplomatic means, development assistance, poverty reduction and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

Multilateral treaties and effective verification mechanisms remain essential. Other important elements include national and internationally coordinated export controls; cooperative threat-reduction programmes; ensuring the control and security of sensitive materials, facilities and expertise; political and economic leverage, including trade and assistance agreements; the interdiction of illegal procurement activities, including through the Proliferation Security Initiative; and, as a last resort, coercive measures in accordance with the Charter.

Peacebuilding is an integral part of the wider security concept. The Peacebuilding Commission brings its own much-needed contribution to United Nations endeavours for peace and security. The EU will work actively to ensure that that new body will have a strong and dynamic role in the United Nations system. In particular, the EU will continue to stress the importance of structurally integrating disarmament, demobilization and reintegration measures into the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The events of the past year show that terrorism continues to threaten international peace and security. This threat can be effectively addressed through broad-based cooperation in the framework of the United Nations. The European Union welcomes the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (resolution 60/288) as an important instrument and expression of international solidarity in the fight against terrorism. The European Union urges Member States to build on this achievement and to intensify their efforts to reach a speedy consensus on a comprehensive United Nations anti-terrorism convention. We underline the importance of prevention and of conducting the fight against terrorism in accordance with human rights, refugee law and international humanitarian law.

Everything possible must be done to prevent access by terrorists to weapons of mass destruction and other sensitive materials. Terrorist groups have shown that they would not refrain from using the most lethal means.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is potentially the greatest threat to global security, and the spread of missile technology adds a further element of concern. The European Union is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and further strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements.

Meeting the challenge of proliferation and the risks associated with it constitutes a key element in the EU's external relations policy. The European Union Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction commits the Union to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal, to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes, which are of concern worldwide.

The EU is convinced that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation and disarmament provides the best means of countering the threat to international security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to international security. As specified in its 2003 Common Position on multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation, the EU supports the universal ratification of, and adherence to, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as well as the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Those key instruments provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. They contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, and to the fight against terrorism.

The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever. We continue to defend that consensus on the basis of the framework established by the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), by supporting the Decisions and Resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the final document of the 2000 Review Conference, and shall bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report, which includes the programme of work adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process in which the European Union will engage.

The European Union stands by its Common Position, agreed on 25 April 2005, related to the NPT Review Conference. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on those States not yet Party to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States. The European Union considers that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with Additional Protocols constitute the current International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) verification standard and are an essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT.

In this year of the 50th anniversary of the approval of the IAEA Statute, the European Union reaffirms its full support for the work of that unique and indispensable organization. We support strengthening the role of the United Nations Security Council as final arbiter of international peace and security, in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

The European Union is looking forward to the first Preparatory Committee meeting of the next NPT Review Conference in 2007, which should take place in Vienna. We are committed to contributing actively to a successful outcome of that meeting. In our view, the next NPT review cycle will have to produce tangible results that build on all three pillars of the NPT in order to reinforce the regime.

However, that essential regime is under pressure from the challenges posed by the question of Iran's nuclear programme and by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's self-declared possession of nuclear weapons.

The European Union welcomes the adoption of Security Council resolution 1696 (2006) and calls upon Iran to respond positively and swiftly to the demands of the international community in implementing the resolution, in particular by suspending its enrichment activities in accordance with the resolution.

The European Union urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon and completely dismantle any nuclear weapons-related programme in a prompt, transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The European Union attaches clear priority to the negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) — a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — as a means to strengthen disarmament and non-proliferation. That was made clear in the Common Position adopted by the European Union related to the NPT Review Conference on 25 April 2005, and by which the European Union stands. We are ready to promote the FMCT and support the start of FMCT negotiations in spring 2007.

The European Union stresses the need to continue, with determination to strengthen action in countering the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and their ammunition. Those weapons have become real everyday weapons of mass destruction. We have committed ourselves to tackling the problem through the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. That undertaking was confirmed at the highest level during the World Summit last year.

The European Union is deeply disappointed that the United Nations Review Conference on the Programme of Action was unable to agree on an outcome document. Notwithstanding this, we recognize the value of the Conference in reaffirming our commitment to the principles, measures and objectives of the Programme of Action.

In a new positive development, the European Union welcomes the growing support, in all parts of the world, for an international arms trade treaty to establish common standards for the global trade in conventional arms, as a comprehensive instrument based on universally accepted norms and standards. The start of a comprehensive process to that end at the earliest opportunity at the United Nations is called for and the draft resolution under discussion provides the basis for that. Binding standards, consistent with the existing responsibilities of States under relevant

international law, would be critical in tackling conventional arms proliferation, which is undesirable and irresponsible and which undermines peace, security, development and full respect for human rights in some of the most vulnerable parts of the world. The European Union invites other States and regions to engage in the discussion and to agree on the start of a United Nations-based process to take forward action in that area.

As mentioned, the full text of this statement is available in written form. Please be assured of our full support during the Conference.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Madam, upon your election as Chairperson of the First Committee. We also extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Mexico fully supports the statement just made by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Coalition of the New Agenda. We thank the representative of Egypt for the kind words addressed to my delegation. On this occasion, I would like to refer to matters of particular interest for my Government. I shall not read my full text, which will be available later on.

The current situation appears to be characterized by the constant threat of an imbalance between, on the one hand, actions taken to achieve disarmament objectives and on the other hand, those taken in order to fight terrorism and non-proliferation. In particular, with regard to the last two issues, the fight against the scourge of terrorism tends to favour horizontal non-proliferation strategies.

My country deplores the fact that we have been unable to halt the trend of ongoing failures in the negotiations on disarmament. We hoped that after the frustration of 2005, we would be able to take a new direction in 2006. Yet, our hopes were dashed once again. The Conference on Disarmament was unable to adopt a programme that would allow it to resume its substantive negotiations. Regrettably, even in the area of small arms and light weapons, the Small Arms Review Conference, which took place here a few months ago, was unable to achieve results owing to the opposition of one delegation.

That last situation was particularly disappointing for the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean. Those countries met together in Antigua, Guatemala, in May of this year, and sought to complement the Programme of Action at the Review Conference, by adopting measures to regulate brokering activities in the area of small arms and light weapons. We also sought to support the adoption of an internationally legally binding instrument on illicit arms brokering.

Furthermore, we are concerned by the lack of regulation of the possession by civilians of small arms, the laxity in the regulation of ammunitions and, above all, by the transfer of weapons to non-State actors. My delegation is fully committed to those objectives, agreed at a regional level and clearly reflected in the Antigua Declaration. In this regard, we believe that the initiative launched by Costa Rica and other countries in support of an arms trade treaty can become a very valuable instrument.

The unacceptable paralysis in the Conference on Disarmament has caused us to seek alternatives that would allow us to progress with that agenda. Our ideas have not always been welcomed by those who did not wish to make progress and who, indeed, have impeded progress in other forums. We have heard their objections, but what we have not heard are their proposals for breaking this stalemate. We still believe that owing to its universal composition and its working methods, the General Assembly is the body that can take on those responsibilities that other bodies have been unable to take on owing to a lack of political will and the abuse of the rule of consensus, which has turned into a real form of veto. The initiative that we presented last year in this forum remains valid, especially in light of the events of the 2006 Conference on Disarmament. We shall continue our consultations on this matter.

My country has taken note with interest of certain proposals that were introduced during the Conference on Disarmament, and we have indicated our flexibility. The best example is our readiness to start work on a treaty banning fissile material, using the mandate and the draft instrument presented for the consideration of the Conference this summer as a starting point, regardless of their shortcomings. We wish to be constructive, and we would expect that others will be equally open-minded to work on issues that are priority issues for the majority, such as nuclear disarmament. We express our hope that 2007 will be a year of true progress and not merely a repetition of what happened in 2006. If the current situation persists, the Conference will continue to lose credibility and it will

be necessary to find alternatives that will enable us to make progress in those areas where that forum is unsuccessful.

We shall soon begin another cycle in the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a fundamental instrument for the international security system. As was stated by the Minister for Energy of Mexico just a few weeks ago at the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency, my Government firmly supports Austria's proposal to hold the first sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty in Vienna during the first semester of 2007. Mexico considers that such a venue would enhance the strong link between the Treaty and the Agency. We hope also that during this first session we shall be able to lay the foundation to ensure that this Treaty, the keystone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, will emerge further strengthened at the end of this process. In order to achieve that objective, we must focus our efforts on the rights, duties and compliance with the obligations enshrined in the three pillars of the Treaty: the inalienable right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, the obligation not to acquire or transfer nuclear weapons and the obligation to reduce nuclear stockpiles in order to achieve nuclear disarmament. These are fundamental legally binding commitments that must be addressed in the same manner.

In addition to the provisions of the Treaty, there are further agreements that were reached by consensus in the review conferences. These include the decision on the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament that was part of the compromise that allowed for the open-ended extension of the Treaty in 1995. That decision laid down the conditions for the establishment of agreements on nuclear supplies, including the acceptance of legally binding agreements not to acquire nuclear weapons. In this regard, Mexico is closely following developments such as the conclusion of nuclear cooperation agreements with non-party States to the Treaty. Not respecting the basic principles agreed upon also erodes the non-proliferation regime that we have been painstakingly building over the past few decades.

In this regard, Mexico is undertaking actions aimed towards eradicating the nuclear threat, including the possible diversion of nuclear material and technology for non-peaceful ends as well as the possibility of terrorists making use of weapons of mass destruction, threatening the security of our nations. On 8 July 2006, we celebrated the tenth anniversary of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice with regard to the obligation to undertake and conclude negotiations in good faith to achieve general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls. This is a legal obligation that must be speedily fulfilled. My country emphasizes that without effective disarmament our efforts in the area of non-proliferation will be seriously undermined.

At the conclusion of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the nuclear-weapon States unequivocally committed themselves to the total destruction of their stockpiles. It is a matter of concern to my delegation that this objective has not been met and that those States have denied or ignored that commitment. Once again, we call upon the nuclear-weapon States, several of which are depositaries of the Treaty, to keep their word and to speed up the work to implement the 13 practical measures for nuclear disarmament agreed upon in 2000.

In accordance with the commitments made, there should be firm steps towards nuclear disarmament. But on the contrary, we note with deep concern that nuclear weapons continue to be part of strategic doctrines and that the development of new, more sophisticated types of nuclear weapons is even being considered. It is also troublesome that today there is no single legally binding instrument that satisfactorily regulates the question of missiles.

My Government welcomed the report of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, headed by Dr. Hans Blix, emphasizing that nuclear weapons must never be used. The recommendations adopted by consensus by its members are a valuable contribution that will stimulate the debate on disarmament and will guide the actions of States in this matter. In this regard, we welcome the invitation extended by the chair to Dr. Blix to participate in a panel of independent experts on 16 October during our thematic debate.

The tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is a good opportunity to call once again on States that have not ratified that Treaty, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, to do so without delay. In this regard, my Government welcomes the recent ratification by Vietnam.

My delegation will continue to work in a constructive manner in this Committee in order to achieve its objectives, and we shall support the chair in its efforts to achieve the success of our endeavours.

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of Argentina.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Argentina, to congratulate you for your election to chair this Committee. We feel that the selection of a woman to chair this important Committee will contribute to strengthening the awareness of a gender perspective on these issues and throughout our Organization. We extend our congratulations to the other members of the bureau. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Tanaka, and wish him success in the fulfilment of his duties.

The distinguished delegation of Brazil will make a statement on behalf of Mercosur and its associated States during the thematic debate. We fully share those statements. For the sake of briefness, I shall limit myself to the foliowing comments. The adaptation and redefinition of the United Nations and the regional structures to the new international context requires, in our opinion, effective multilateral dialogue. In the field of disarmament and international security, we face a situation of paralysis of the so-called disarmament machinery that cannot continue. The delegation of Argentine calls upon all delegations to establish a frank dialogue, adopting a pragmatic approach in order to give an answer to new challenges.

In the field of weapons of mass destruction, we continue to promote actively the universalization and strengthening of existing legally-binding disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, with a view to strengthening the basis of shared security. At the same time, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime should be accompanied with the access to technology by States that fully comply with their international obligations.

On the other hand, the excessive stockpiling of conventional weapons and, in particular, of small arms is both a result of tensions or conflicts. It is also a cause of worsening or persistent conflicts and contributed to high rates of crime and causing deaths among innocent civilians, particularly, among the most vulnerable segments of society.

We welcome the results achieved this year by the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. There is no doubt regarding the relevance of this confidence-building measure for increasing transparency at the global level.

At the same time, we cannot refrain from expressing our frustration at the lack of results achieved during the 2006 Small Arms Review Conference. We hope that we will be able to redirect these efforts in the near future.

During the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Argentina took the initiative of introducing a draft resolution entitled "Information on Confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons". We did so convinced that dialogue and mutual understanding are the basis for generating the necessary political will.

After the adoption of General Assembly resolutions 59/92 and 60/82, without a vote and with a large number of sponsors, and following the establishment of a database in the Department for Disarmament Affairs, we believe that we are in a position to contribute to the effectiveness of this Committee's work and to proceed to the biennialization of this resolution. Once again, we are grateful for all the expressions of co-sponsorship that had been received, and once again we invite all delegations to support this initiative.

Madam, before concluding, we wish to express our acknowledgment of and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Choi of the Republic of Korea, for his excellent performance and leadership.

Madam, know that you can count on our full support and the full cooperation of our delegation to make this session of our Committee as fruitful as we all desire.

Mr. Cheng (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam, at the outset, please allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of this session of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. Under your able leadership, the current session of the Committee is sure to be crowned with success.

Over the past year since the last session of the Committee, the international security situation has not been tranquil. Developments of international and

regional situations have been affected by frequent regional conflicts and the complicated hotspot issues. However, peace, development and cooperation are still the common aspirations of the international community. During this important historical period, in which opportunities and challenges go hand in hand, it is imperative for all States to foster a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. We should strive to build a harmonious world by upholding multilateralism and pursuing a win-win approach, where countries coexist in amity politically, conduct mutually beneficial economic cooperation on an equal footing, trust one another, coordinate closely on security matters and complement each other culturally.

Since the beginning of this year, regional non-proliferation issues have been very prominent. The diplomatic process to resolve these issues has experienced twists and turns and is faced with great difficulty. At the same time, double standards and opportunism remain unabated. The international non-proliferation regime is in danger of being further weakened. In the current situation, it has become an important and urgent issue for the international community to strike a balance between non-proliferation, on the one hand, and maintenance of regional peace and stability, the legitimate security concerns for countries involved and the right to peaceful uses, on the other. In this regard, China would like to put forward the following proposals.

First, a comprehensive approach should be adopted in addressing both the symptoms and the root causes of proliferation problems. No international non-proliferation efforts should deviate from the fundamental objective of maintaining and promoting regional and international peace and stability.

Secondly, parties concerned should commit themselves to the normalization of their relationships through consultation and on the basis of mutual respect, which will greatly contribute to achieving non-proliferation goals and promoting peace and stability.

Thirdly, the approach of dialogue and negotiations should be further pursued. Resorting to sanctions or exerting pressure will not resolve problems at the root and can lead to the escalation of crises with resulting negative effects.

Fourthly, the impartiality and non-discriminatory nature of international non-proliferation efforts should be ensured and the relationship between non-proliferation and peaceful uses of science and technology should be properly managed in a balanced manner.

Fifthly, effective measures should be taken to safeguard the international non-proliferation regime. The international community should, through discussions with broad participation, advance with the times and build up a large consensus so as to consolidate and reinforce multilateral mechanisms.

On the Korean peninsula nuclear issue, China is committed to maintaining peace and stability on the peninsula, making the peninsula free of nuclear weapons, and promoting the six-party talks. It has been proved that the six-party talks remain an effective mechanism for enhancing understanding and trust and resolving the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. We hope the parties concerned will work together to expand common ground, and meet each other halfway in a cool-headed manner and with greater flexibility, with a view to the early resumption of the six-party talks and a gradual implementation of the joint statement issued during the fourth round of the six-party talks. This is the only viable solution to the Korean peninsula nuclear issue.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, China supports the efforts to safeguard the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and is opposed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, while standing for the maintenance of peace and stability in the Middle East and a peaceful resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiations. While entitled to the peaceful use of nuclear energy, all States should honour their treaty obligations and commitments. The priority at this very moment is to keep up serious dialogue between Iran and the European Union-3 so as to resume talks at an early date. China hopes that the parties involved will show more flexibility, remain calm and patient, and stay committed to the right cause of pursuing peaceful solutions. That will create favourable conditions for bringing the Iranian nuclear issue back on to the track of negotiations. China will continue to play a constructive role in this process.

Multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation mechanisms are an important component of the current international security system.

They play an essential role in maintaining world peace and stability and promoting the common development of all States. However, it is regrettable that, over the past year, the multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process has been beset with great difficulties. Despite some progress, the work of relevant multilateral institutions is still lacks momentum.

Under the new circumstances, it serves the common interests of all States to constantly promote the sound development of a multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, which is also the common responsibility of all States. China believes that the international community should focus its efforts on the following aspects.

First, it should be dedicated to preserving global strategic stability and realizing the common security of all States, so as to remove the root cause of the danger to peace and stability. The role of nuclear weapons in national security should be reduced and a nuclear disarmament position should constantly be promoted. An international legal instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear weapons States should be negotiated and considered at an early date. Preventive and effect measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of outer space and an armed race in outer space. An appropriate international legal instrument should be negotiated and concluded so as to ensure the peaceful use of outer space.

Secondly, the international community should be committed to preserving and asserting international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. Currently, it is imperative to enhance the authority, the universality and effectiveness of such arms control and non-proliferation treaties as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, to promote the early entering into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and to take concrete measures to reinforce the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards system.

Thirdly, the traditional multilateral arms control and disarmament institutions should be revitalized. The Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission have always been important platforms for promoting multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts. In the light of the new situation and the new tasks, effective measures should be taken to break the deadlocks in the relevant institutions and thus reinvigorate them so that they can play their appropriate roles. At the same time, it is important to adhere to the principle of consensus in order to guarantee the fairness, coherence and universality of multilateral arms control and disarmament efforts.

Fourthly, the international community should take a people-oriented approach in addressing humanitarian problems related to arms control. The implementation of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and its Protocols should be further promoted, and their universality and effectiveness should be enhanced. In addition, the comprehensive and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms remains an urgent task of the international community. Measures should be taken to ensure its effective implementation.

Fifthly, there is a need for enhanced capacity-building in combating new threats such as nuclear terrorism.

As an architect and advocate of and a participant in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime, China, in a highly responsible manner, has always taken concrete measures aimed at supporting multilateralism and promoting the cause of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never failed to shoulder its responsibilities and obligations in the area of international nuclear disarmament. China has always supported the complete prohibition and total destruction of nuclear weapons and has refrained from engaging in a nuclear arms race, instead contributing to international nuclear disarmament. China has always actively promoted international efforts to prevent the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space.

China firmly opposes the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and participates actively in international non-proliferation efforts. We actively support and participate in the work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). In July 2006, China, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the European Union and the Governments of Australia, Denmark, Norway and the United Kingdom, successfully hosted an international workshop in Beijing — the first of its

kind — on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the Asia-Pacific region.

China resolutely follows the path of peaceful development. It has always put its own development at the service of the collective progress of humanity, making its development both an end and a means in the maintenance of world peace. On the basis of that fundamental national policy, China will continue to participate extensively in and actively promote the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process, moving forward hand in hand with peoples throughout the world in their tireless efforts to build a harmonious world of lasting peace and shared prosperity.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Permit me at the outset to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as Chairperson of the Committee and to assure you of my delegation's full support in carrying out your work.

The First Committee is the main forum for discussions on arms control and disarmament. To that end, and in order to facilitate a substantive exchange of views, we welcome the continued implementation of the measures adopted in 2004 to improve the effectiveness and productivity of our work.

We note that the international forums for arms control and disarmament negotiations remain generally at an impasse. Those deadlocks result not from the existing structures, but from a lack of will on the part of States to enter into negotiations. The differing interests and priorities of States are particularly obvious within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Nevertheless, and thanks to the 2006 initiative of the six Presidents of the Conference, the Conference now seems to be back on the right track. Coordination among the Presidents has enabled us to organize structured and thematic debates on all the agenda items of the Conference. We are particularly pleased with the debate on the negotiations on cutting off the production of fissile material for military purposes. We believe that negotiations must begin on that issue without delay or preconditions, taking into account the interests of all Conference members.

Switzerland, which will assume a presidency of the Conference in 2007, strongly supports coordinating the work of the next six Presidents. We will make every effort to consolidate the progress made in 2006. However, it should be noted that the search for consensus in the multilateral context depends largely on regional developments and on the success of international diplomacy.

Nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament and cooperation are at the heart of my country's concerns. In that connection, we should like to highlight three subjects in particular.

First, developments related to the Iranian nuclear issue continue to hold our full attention. Switzerland remains convinced that the contentious aspects of the Iranian nuclear issue can and must be resolved through the path of diplomacy. Switzerland therefore calls on the parties concerned to come to the negotiating table as swiftly as possible to avoid an escalation whose consequences would affect everyone.

Secondly, although hopes arose in 2005 that substantive negotiations might begin on the nuclear issue involving the Korean peninsula, new concerns have arisen because of the rumours about the possibility of a nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Therefore, Switzerland calls on all parties engaged in the Six-Party Talks process to display a spirit of consensus that will enable it to resume. We also call on the People's Democratic Republic of Korea to rejoin the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Thirdly, the planned initiative on nuclear cooperation between India and the United States raises fundamental questions about the future of the nuclear non-proliferation system based on the NPT. Moreover, this plan to deregulate nuclear cooperation stands in stark contrast to recently proposed measures that are even more restrictive with regard to access to "sensitive" nuclear technologies. Switzerland is of the view that the right to engage in cooperation and to gain access to sensitive technologies remains dependent on adherence to the NPT and on strict application of all its provisions.

This year, a review conference in an area of interest to the Committee has already been held, and two others will take place immediately following after our deliberations: the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Sixth Review

Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.

Switzerland is convinced that the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an achievement of fundamental importance. Despite the failure of the Review Conference in July, it is the only United Nations document that contains a comprehensive catalogue of measures to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It is also the only document to have been accepted by all United Nations Member States. Switzerland supports the global follow-up process and considers it imperative that a biennial meeting be held in 2008.

My country is also committed to giving greater consideration to the negative effects of armed violence on development. In particular, it is important that the consensus expressed at last year's World Summit regarding the links among security, peace, human rights and development be reflected in joint international efforts. That is why Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme took the initiative to convene a ministerial summit on armed violence and development, on 7 June in Geneva. At the close of the summit, the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development was adopted by the 42 States present.

Biological weapons are a subject of grave concern for my country. Knowledge and technology in the field of biotechnology and genetic science are developing swiftly in both the civilian and the military arenas; hence, the risks of abuse are constantly increasing. We appeal to all Member States to find common ground during the Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, which will take place this fall in Geneva. In particular, we wish to see the establishment of a follow-up process to strengthen compliance with the Convention.

Regarding the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, Switzerland supports efforts to conclude the discussions on mines other than antipersonnel mines by means of a legal instrument which would better protect civilian populations against these terrible weapons. Likewise, it expects the Review Conference to work to find solutions to the grave humanitarian problems caused by submunitions.

The second Review Conference on the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will be held in 2008. Switzerland welcomes the progress made since its entry into force and is confident that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons will be able to continue its work unimpeded. Nevertheless, major challenges remain. In particular, stocks of residual chemical weapons not only pose an ongoing threat to the environment and to peoples, but also represent a possible supply source, in particular for terrorist groups. Switzerland therefore calls on all countries that possess such weapons to do everything in their power to destroy all their stocks of chemical weapons within the time frame envisaged in the Convention.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the fact that Switzerland actively supports the effective control of the international trade in conventional weapons on the basis of globally applicable criteria. This is why it favours a harmonization of the rules applying to the arms trade by means of an internationally binding legal instrument such as the arms trade treaty proposed by the United Kingdom and other countries in the draft resolution. We are convinced that the United Nations is the perfect framework for such work.

Switzerland has for a long time been particularly interested in the question of transparency in armaments, because this is an important factor in the framework of confidence and security between States. My country took part in the Group of Governmental Experts established by resolution 60/226, which was charged with reviewing the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Switzerland welcomes the fact that the Group was able to reach a consensus on recommendations designed not only to improve the operation of the Register but also to increase its relevance.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Madam Chairperson, allow me first of all to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Ambassador Mona Juul, presiding over the First Committee. Rest assured of the full cooperation of the delegation of Brazil in the course of our deliberations.

As President Lula da Silva stated at the opening of this session of the General Assembly:

> "There is no more effective way [than multilateralism] to bring States together, to keep the peace, to protect human rights, to promote sustainable development and to work out negotiated solutions to common problems." (*See A/61/PV.10*)

Brazil is committed to multilateralism across the full spectrum of international relations, not least in the area of peace and security. Multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and established practices of international law, provide the only sustainable method of addressing international security issues. The need for effective collective measures in order to re-establish confidence and settle international disputes is more pressing than ever at a time when regional tensions continue to escalate, conflicts remain a daily reality, and civilian populations continue to suffer mounting casualties.

It is both unfortunate and worrisome that today we are witnessing a continuing erosion of multilateralism and that recent events have demonstrated an increasing tendency towards unilaterally imposed measures. Another disquieting trend is Security Council encroachment on General Assembly competences with respect to issues relating to international peace and security. Measures under Chapter VII of the Charter should not be used indiscriminately. Yet another such trend is the non-fulfilment of commitments and obligations assumed under the relevant international legally binding instruments, especially with respect to weapons of mass destruction.

The Government of Brazil fully concurs with the assessment that terrorism and prospects of the further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prominent among contemporary threats to international peace and security. One of the most terrifying possibilities is, indeed, that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must endeavour to prevent such a scenario from ever becoming reality, while acting strictly within accepted principles and norms of international law.

The threat of terrorism only adds to the urgency of nuclear disarmament, which must remain the highest priority in the field of weapons of mass destruction. In this area, as in any other, setting an example can only strengthen one's argument. The only real guarantee against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination.

In the wake of the lack of any substantive results by the seventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) last year, much thought has been given to finding ways forward. Nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT should realize that the impasse at the Review Conference was, to a large extent, due to the perception that there has not been any sign of real resolve to eliminate existing nuclear arsenals. The Treaty has been in force for nearly 40 years; the cold war has, thankfully, long been over, yet the nuclear disarmament commitment that the nuclear-weapon States parties undertook under article VI has yet to be implemented.

In that respect, we lend our full support to the position expressed earlier today by the head of the Egyptian delegation on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition and reiterate our readiness to work together actively in order to attain the strongest possible outcome on nuclear disarmament in the next NPT review cycle. It has been Brazil's traditional stand that efforts towards non-proliferation must take place in parallel with efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Horizontal proliferation is a real and serious concern. Parties to the NPT must take a sober look at current challenges to the regime and try hard not only to find ways to ensure compliance with its prohibitions but also to make the Treaty universal. The threat posed by enduring nuclear arsenals is perceived by a large majority of the parties to the NPT to be at least as important as the risks of further proliferation.

Non-proliferation efforts must, however, respect the basic and inalienable right of States to engage in research on, produce and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without any discrimination and in conformity with applicable legal obligations.

Having held the presidency of the seventh Review Conference of the NPT last year, Brazil is expected, following past practice, to submit to the General Assembly during this session a draft resolution calling for the convening of the preparatory process for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. We hope that this process will contribute to the strengthening of the Treaty and to its balanced implementation.

Also in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, I should point out that, as part of its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, Brazil accepted the chairmanship of the Nuclear Suppliers Group for 2006-2007 and hosted the 2006 plenary in Brasilia in June.

It is regrettable that throughout 2006 the Conference on Disarmament remained deadlocked over its programme of work. The structured debates based on all items of its agenda during the 2006 session were, however, an innovative attempt to create a more receptive environment. We hope that such initiatives will facilitate the adoption of a substantive programme of work.

Brazil hopes to achieve progress at the Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference, which is to be held in Geneva in November. We are currently working in coordination with other Group of Latin American and Caribbean States members with a view to presenting joint proposals that include the idea of establishing a support unit for the Convention. The topic of export and import controls should also be discussed during the review process.

In the field of conventional weapons, we can only express our deep disappointment at the lack of substantive results at the first United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York last June. The General Assembly should adopt a decision to ensure that there is a proper framework for the continuous assessment of the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as measures to strengthen it.

Brazil is committed to the goal of negotiating effective, balanced and non-discriminatory multilateral regulations on the international arms trade, including a possible future treaty to regulate trade in conventional arms. One of the core objectives of an arms trade treaty must be to prevent conventional weapons from being diverted for illicit purposes, such as organized crime and terrorism, without prejudice to the right of States to produce, acquire and maintain such weapons for self-defence purposes in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Brazil's arms transfers are already subject to regular national export-control procedures, which incorporate all international commitments to which the country is a party. It is important that discussions on a possible future arms trade treaty focus not solely on criteria for the authorization of arms transfers, but also on practical measures aimed at preventing diversion.

The concept of development is closely related to that of disarmament. Arms expenditures divert substantive financial, material and human resources that could be otherwise invested in social programmes. We believe that in the context of the future negotiation of an arms trade treaty, due consideration should be given to the taxation of the arms trade as an example of an innovative financing mechanism.

Mr. Mine (Japan). At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Juul, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee. I have confidence in your ability to guide us through this session, and I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out that important task. This session has not been under way for very long, but you have already demonstrated that you are truly committed to the efficient management of the Committee.

Earlier speakers have spoken about the problems that we are facing and the challenges for the international community, so I will not spend time repeating those points. We have no time to lament those results. Two review conferences — those on the Conventional Weapons Convention and on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention — still await us this year. Furthermore, the Conference on Disarmament, building on the momentum developed this year, is expected to move ahead next year. In addition, next year we will begin the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in preparation for the 2010 Review Conference.

Against this backdrop, the First Committee must squarely confront the challenges that the international community faces. It must hold in-depth deliberations on how the problems can be resolved in an efficient and effective manner, harmonize as much as possible the various approaches of Member States and adopt powerful, action-oriented draft resolutions. Japan's draft resolution on nuclear disarmament calls for practical and realistic steps, including deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons. It deals with important items, including the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and a fissile material cut-off treaty, to which I will refer later.

The draft resolution on small arms and light weapons, which is submitted each year by Columbia, South Africa and Japan, has laid out a clear road map for the steady implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, including the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument of marking and tracing and of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in this area. Furthermore, in the area of small arms and light weapons, there are a few problems that we must make every effort to tackle if we are to achieve consensus.

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the First Committee's methods of work is crucial not only in and of itself, but also in the context of United Nations reforms. We do not need to formulate novel ideas to this end. Rather, we should aim for the full implementation of resolution 59/95, adopted in 2004. In this connection, Japan places great emphasis on the biennialization or triennialization of agenda items on a voluntary basis; the submission of draft resolutions in a more concise, focused and action-oriented manner; the consideration of merging draft resolutions on related or complementary issues; follow-up on agreed draft resolutions; and information from the Secretary-General on the detailed estimated cost of all draft resolutions and draft decisions. In particular, the First Committee should always be aware of budgetary implications when deliberating on draft resolutions and draft decisions. Also, greater involvement on the part of civil society in the work of the Committee is important.

Draft resolutions adopted in the First Committee and, subsequently, in the General Assembly, should not be left unattended, but must be followed up. As a first step, Japan calls upon all Member States to refer to their follow-up actions in their general debate statements. I would like to refer — as one example — to follow-up actions in connection with our draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. With regard to the universalization of the NPT and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Japan held disarmament and non-proliferation talks with India, Pakistan and Israel from May to June this year and urged all three countries to join the NPT and ratify the CTBT. Those are some of our past follow-up activities; we will continue such activities in the future.

At this stage, I would like to touch upon the fact that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT. The Treaty now enjoys near-universal support: 176 countries have signed it and 135 have ratified it. We greatly welcome Viet Nam's ratification in March this year, which means that the ratification of only 10 more countries is required for its entry into force. For the purpose of facilitating its early entry into force, a ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT was held two weeks ago in this building, which was attended by Mr. Ito, who was at that time Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. In relation to the upcoming meetings of the international forums, including the two Review Conferences and the Conference on Disarmament, the United Nations should not only render the necessary logistical assistance and services, but also pay close attention to their outcomes so that future meetings will succeed. Of particular importance are the Conference on Disarmament and the new NPT review process, both of which will be referred to in the various draft resolutions, including Japan's nuclear disarmament draft resolution.

Before concluding, let me say a few words about the Conference on Disarmament. This year, a more productive environment has developed thanks to the Six Presidents initiative. The only missing element now is the commencement of negotiations. As I stated in one of the final meetings of the Conference, although there exists a range of opinions from the perspective of the whole Conference schedule, no opposition has been expressed by any Member State to the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The current and incoming Presidents should closely cooperate, so that the Conference can finally begin negotiations on a fissile material treaty as soon as next year's sessions begin. In the meantime, all of the Conference member States should do their utmost to prepare for the immediate commencement of such negotiations, while trying to continue and even strengthen our deliberations on the other major agenda items of the Conference.

Lastly, regarding the important commencement of the new review process of the NPT, in order to

overcome the disappointing results of 2005, the State parties should all work together towards a constructive beginning for the upcoming 2007 Preparatory Committee in order to achieve a successful outcome of the 2010 Review Conference.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): We are very pleased to see you, Madam, in the Chair presiding over this session of the Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's full support. This year has brought a mixture of challenges and opportunities in the disarmament and international security realm.

We were among those who were disappointed that there was no agreement on an outcome document recording this year's review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We do not underestimate the complexities of reconciling state sovereignty, commercial and trade freedoms and civil liberty considerations with steps that need to be taken at the global level to mitigate and prevent the harm done by the illicit trade in light weapons. At the same time, we consider that further action at the global level is possible and warranted. We need to pursue opportunities to make that happen. In particular, New Zealand supports further work on an arms trade treaty, transfer principles and brokering, over the course of the next year.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), during its 2006 sessions, seemed, at times, closer to breaking its decade-long stalemate than at any other point in recent years. Under the Six Presidents schedule of activities, useful structured thematic debates were held on the core areas of the CD's mandate, in which the participation of experts was a most welcome development. However, we must guard against convincing ourselves that such discussions constitute an adequate substitute for substantive work. We urge all delegations in the Conference to capitalize on the momentum generated this year and to exercise maximum flexibility in their efforts to commence substantive negotiations.

In our view, an immediate task for any rejuvenated CD should be the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). That issue deserves priority consideration on a number of fronts, with its potential as a preventative measure in terms of minimizing stockpile build-up, and also as a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We are all aware of the sensitivities surrounding the issues of stocks and verification. However, to make the commencement of such negotiations subject to agreement on those divisive points at the outset further compromises the security of us all.

The key imperative at this stage should be the launching of negotiations without prejudging their outcome. For New Zealand's part, we are prepared to approach negotiations without preconditions. Within the framework of that process we would then argue for an FMCT that deals adequately with existing stocks and has structured verification provisions. The potential for such a treaty to function as a supporting mechanism for nuclear disarmament is clear. Any instrument that contributes to a norm against the production of nuclear weapons helps to provide momentum to the nuclear disarmament debate.

Creating a world safe from nuclear weapons remains one of the international community's most pressing priorities. My delegation has already registered its views on the imperative for the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments through the statement of the New Agenda Coalition, delivered by Ambassador Shoukry of Egypt at the outset of this general debate. One of the most important responsibilities of the work of the First Committee will be to ensure a smooth start to the next Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process, so that measurable substantive progress within the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime can be achieved.

We commend the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its Director General Mohamed ElBaradei in verifying that nuclear energy programmes are for peaceful uses. It is clear that more stringent verification tools are required to fulfil that mandate. The Additional Protocol is the contemporary verification standard and, as such, should logically be a condition of nuclear supply. We urge those States that have not yet concluded Additional Protocols with the Agency to do so without delay.

We call on Iran to put in place full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA, to respect all of its commitments and to continue negotiations on long-term arrangements. In the pursuit of those objectives, New Zealand supports IAEA and the calls by the

Security Council for Iran to suspend its enrichment and reprocessing programme and comply with all of the requirements of United Nations Security Council resolution 1696 (2006).

The decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to pursue the possession of nuclear weapons creates a serious challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to the stability and security of the Asia-Pacific region, which was already exacerbated by the missile tests in July. We believe that committed dialogue, rather than military brinksmanship, provides the best possibility for achieving a peaceful and comprehensive resolution, and we therefore urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return to the Six Party Talks process.

This year is the tenth anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It is imperative that the treaty enter into force. New Zealand remains fully committed to encouraging the universalization of the CTBT. For us, it remains important that we back our political support for the Treaty by assisting the CTBT in its efforts to encourage States that have not yet done so to ratify the Treaty. In December, we will be participating in the eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Chemical Weapons. We will be emphasising that all chemical weapons stockpiles must be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. Our focus at the Conference will be on the ongoing implementation of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific, as well as on improving the current methodology for selecting sites for inspections.

New Zealand is playing its part towards achieving this goal by contributing, through the Group of Eight (G8) Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, to the chemical-weapons destruction project at Shchuch'ye in the Russian Federation. Through the G8 Global Partnership, New Zealand is also contributing funds towards a project to shut down Russia's last plutonium-producing nuclear reactor and replace it with a fossil-fuel plant. Both of these contributions are practical examples of New Zealand's commitment to disarmament and nuclear safety.

Looking ahead to the remainder of 2006, we have two further important opportunities to make concrete progress on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.

New Zealand is committed to playing an active role in the upcoming Review Conference on the Convention on certain conventional weapons in November and looks forward to seeing progress made on the effective implementation of international humanitarian law so as to mitigate the humanitarian impact of conflict. In particular, New Zealand supports the negotiation of a new, legally binding instrument, which addresses the humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions. We would also welcome the conclusion of an instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines, if a legally binding text could be agreed that made a credible improvement on existing international humanitarian law provisions in this respect.

The Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention will also give States the opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the international management of the biological weapons threat through a comprehensive review of that Treaty. Against the backdrop of rapid developments taking place in biotechnology industries and the threat of terrorist acquisition and use of biological agents for malicious purposes, States parties will need to find new ways to make the Treaty's implementation relevant and effective in the contemporary environment. New Zealand supports the discussion and development of practical steps, which can achieve pragmatic results, particularly in areas relating to national implementation, confidence-building measures, implementation support and inter-sessional processes.

The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report, released in June, reminded us all of the need for a cooperative approach to collective security and a rule-based international order. Our work within the framework of the First Committee should be based on these principles. The international community must collaborate to build the necessary confidence and transparency required to achieve meaningful gains on disarmament and non-proliferation. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in this process.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Russian delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your appointment to the presidency. I would also like to express the certainty that under your guidance we will be able to achieve the results in disarmament and non-proliferation that we all need.

The work of the current session of the General Assembly convincingly demonstrates that there is no alternative to collective action by the international community aimed at maintaining peace and security. The Russian Federation has always advocated the crucial role for the United Nations in dealing with this vital task. The issues of non-proliferation, arms limitation and disarmament remain some of the major areas for joint efforts on the part of the international community.

In recent years, counteracting the major threat posed by international terrorism has overshadowed the urgent issues of disarmament. However, it is too early to speak of an end to the arms race in the world. In his address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 10 May 2006 President Vladimir Putin pointed out that the arms race had entered a new spiral with the new levels of technology that raised the threat of the emergence of a whole arsenal of so-called destabilizing weapons. Containing possible aggression, increasing international status, achieving supremacy over neighbours and the possibility of economic benefits are factors that incite a number of countries to try to obtain such weapons and implement wide-scale military programmes.

A freeze on disarmament efforts naturally negatively affects the process of containing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and does not prevent terrorists from gaining access to those weapons. Unprecedented military expenditures exceeding the highest Cold War levels on the part of various countries, the continuing modernization of strategic offensive and defensive weapons, the danger of positioning weapons in outer space and the use of informational weapons ultimately negatively affect the efforts to maintain the strategic balance of forces in the world. We are convinced that the issue of disarmament should remain on the agenda of international forums and meetings.

Undoubtedly, relations between Russia and the United States are of key importance for preventing a new spin in the arms race and maintaining strategic stability. The importance of our agreements in the area of limitation and reduction of strategic armaments far exceeds the framework of bilateral relations. Substantial positive results have been achieved in this field.

Not only do we strictly observe the limitations under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, but we also continue further reductions on nuclear armaments. Because the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will expire in December 2009, Russia has proposed to our American partners to re-launch the negotiation process.

The non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including its anti-terrorist aspects, remains at the focus of Russian policy during its Group of Eight (G8) Presidency. The Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, put forward by the Presidents of Russia and the United States, was unanimously supported by all G8 leaders in their special statement adopted at this year's Summit in July in St. Petersburg. This initiative constitutes, in essence, a plan of action to foster practical cooperation of States on the implementation of the 2005 International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, as well as to comply with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). With regard to nuclear non-proliferation, the G8 Summit placed new emphasis on the need to elaborate practical measures to ensure access to the benefits of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy for countries that faithfully comply with their treaty obligations.

The initiative of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, with regard to the establishment of international centres to provide services in the field of the nuclear fuel cycle is intended to facilitate achieving the objectives of nuclear non-proliferation. It provides for an alternative to the development of sensitive elements of the nuclear fuel cycle, namely, the enrichment and the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. We intend to work jointly with all interested States on the realization of this initiative with active involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We believe that one of the major threats to the global stability is the possibility of the placement of weapons in outer space. The task of preventing such a scenario is within our strength. The debates held this year at the Conference on Disarmament addressing military and space issues revealed great interest on the parts of States in ensuring that outer space is not turned into an arena of military confrontation, as well as to secure the safe operation of spacecraft and the integrity of costly space assets. The idea of concluding a treaty banning the stationing of weapons in outer space and banning the use or threat of force against space-based objects is gaining side support. We are in favour of the

earliest re-establishment of an ad hoc committee at the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures can serve the purpose of discouraging the placement of weapons in space. We would like to recall the Russian pledge, made at the United Nations, that Russia will not be the first to place weapons in outer space. A similar political commitment was made by the members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization. We repeat our call on all States that have military space capability to follow our example.

We believe that the time has come to review the entire range of confidence-building measures in outer space from a modern viewpoint and update the proposals on this issue that were elaborated at the United Nations during the beginning of the 1990s. We plan to submit for review of the First Committee a new draft resolution entitled "Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities". We call on delegations to support this Russian initiative.

The possibility of using information and communication technologies for hostile purposes presents a serious threat to security at the national, regional and international levels. It is important to keep the issues of ensuring international information security at the centre of United Nations attention and not to weaken joint efforts to seek approved ways to deal with such issues effectively. We intend, in this connection, to introduce an updated draft resolution entitled "Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security", prepared on the basis of the last year's text. We hope that it will be supported.

We believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the foundation of international security and stability. We maintain that new challenges and threats to the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be resolved on the basis of this Treaty. Even today, we should set a business-like tone to prepare for the next five-year review of the Treaty beginning in 2007. We advocate a collective search for solutions aimed at strengthening the Non-Proliferation Treaty regime, in particular, its unconditional implementation at the national level and an increase of its universality and viability.

In this context the settlement of the problems related to the nuclear programme of Iran remains relevant. We stand for political and diplomatic solutions, which, on the one hand, will allow Iran to develop nuclear energy under the IAEA safeguards and assure, on the other hand, the exclusively peaceful character of Teheran's nuclear programme.

I think that the delegates will be able to familiarize themselves with the basic points of my statement currently being distributed. I would like to draw everyone's attention to a positive development, as of today, with regard to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. I would like in that connection to welcome the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. This is an important step in fostering the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime. We expect that the Treaty will facilitate strengthening security and stability in the Central Asian region, and will make a substantial contribution to the fight against international terrorism and to preventing nuclear materials and technologies from falling into the hands of non-State actors.

Let me assure you of the support and cooperation on the part of the Russian Delegation for achieving practical results in the work of the Committee.

The Chairperson: Let me remind delegations that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will close tomorrow, Tuesday, at 6 p.m. Therefore, those delegations that have not yet inscribed themselves on the list should do so as soon as possible. I would also make an appeal to delegations to be flexible during the general debate and be prepared to speak one day earlier, in line with the practice of the rolling list of speakers.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.